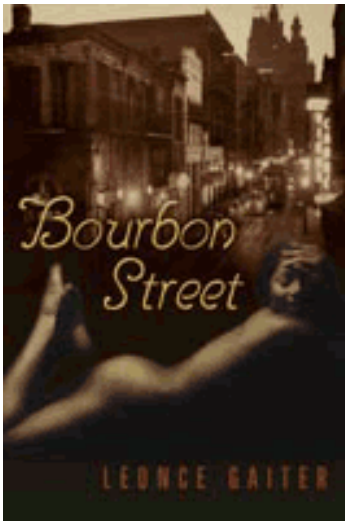


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## REVIEW

### Review: *Larry Coryell, Badi Assad, and John Abercrombie: The Paris Concert*

Posted by [gypsyman](#) on September 22, 2005 11:07 AM (See [all posts by gypsyman](#))

Filed under: [Video](#), [Culture/Tech: Arts, Music: Instrumental](#), [Music: International](#), [Music: Jam Band](#), [Music: Jazz](#), [Music: Latin](#), [Music: Live Concerts](#), [Video: Music](#), [Video: Performing Arts](#) - Scroll down to read [comments on this story](#) and/or add one of your own.



[Coryell Abercrombie & Assad: Guitars P](#)

DVD from *Music Video Distribu*  
Release date: 04 October, 2005

Have you ever had your expectations totally stood on their head? Anticipating a recording or a concert will take you in one direction, and from its first instance it careens off into an area you couldn't have dreamt of. This was my experience with the new DVD recording of *Three Guitars: Larry Coryell, Badi Assad, and John Abercrombie The Paris Concert*.

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The names [Larry Coryell](#) and [John Abercrombie](#)

are synonymous with Jazz fusion guitar for the past thirty odd years. With

those two names on the masthead it is fair to assume that you're in store for phenomenal guitar playing. But the inclusion of [Badi Assad](#), an unknown quantity for me, resulted in a performance of the likes I could not have anticipated.

The guitar playing was superlative, with all three proving their virtuosity on many an occasion, but Assad was unlike any performer I have ever seen before. While her guitar playing is significant, her vocal gymnastics and percussion proficiency stole the spotlight from her more famous band mates. I may not have heard of her before this concert, but I will never forget her now.

It was only the second song into the performance that I got my first inkling that I was about to see something special. On "Metamorphosis" Assad began showed how the human voice can be used as a percussion instrument. With a series of trills, clicks and sounds she set up an amazing accompaniment to the guitar work of Coryell and Abercrombie. Blowing into a tin whistle set on a stand she created a sound collage



*kind of delicious dir... [\[more\]](#)*

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that became a lead instrument carrying the motif established by the guitars to places I didn't think possible.

It was only the beginning. Two songs later, "Descending Grace", she placed her guitar aside and turned herself into a percussion orchestra. Starting with a complicated series of handclaps, she gradually began to incorporate more and more of her body into the rhythm. Her upper chest, finger snaps, her cheeks, her throat, and her thighs were all surfaces used to generate sound and beat.

Words on the page seem inadequate to describe the impact of her performance. Many people use these types of techniques, but I have never seen anyone manage to create the sounds and texture that she was able to generate through them. Through out the concert she would take the simple and commonplace and make it miraculous. Even the usually boring (to my ears anyway) thumb drum (wooden box with flexible metal strands plucked by the fingers to generate sound) came alive in her hands.

Given her ability to use her voice for percussion it was no surprise that her singing abilities were superb. Whether a straight-ahead song in her native Portuguese such as "Insensatez" or improvised scat to Coryell's "No Flight Tonight" Assad's voice was passionate and sensual. On their final encore, "Corcovado", her voice lifted her out of her chair to start moving with the music, as she became caught up in its passion and power.

*I always like Eddie Albert's enthusiasm on screen ...*  
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*I believe I said all that needs to be said in my o...* [\[more\]](#)

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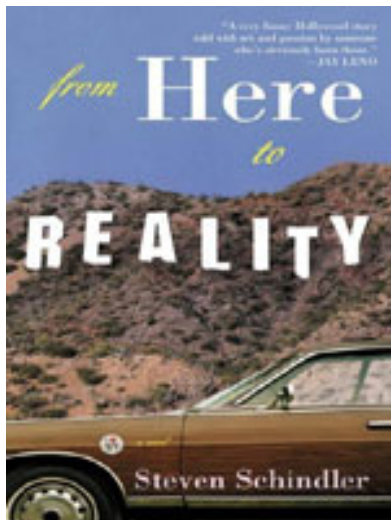
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The  
TERRY KNIGHT  
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## "REQUIRED READING" New York Post



Ironically it was only during her breaks that I remembered who were supposed to be the featured performers on this disc.

"Soundtrack" and "Blues" found Coryell and Abercrombie on stage alone together and served as reminders as why they have been considered the seminal guitar players of their generation.

On the former Abercrombie carried the bulk of the lead work while Coryell turned his guitar into a bass, providing a strong support for John's feather light finger work. Impassive to the point of seeming almost not involved, Abercrombie's runs were like rain drops of music falling onto parched soil. Never a deluge threatening to overwhelm the listener, they epitomize the philosophy of less is more. One beautifully played note has more emotional impact than twenty compressed into the same time.

It's the sign of a mature player who has confidence in his abilities that they are satisfied with doing their best for the music, rather than the concert being about them. When Abercrombie plays he is the messenger for the music, making sure that what the music needs to say is communicated to the audience.

There were times when watching Larry Coryell in this concert that I forgot he was playing a guitar. The sounds were nothing like that I have ever heard to come out of any other guitar before. Notes of such beauty that they would make you

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almost stop breathing would be  
followed by dazzling burst of speed  
that would send your pulse racing.

It was Jazz guitar, as I have never  
heard before in my life. Fast,  
certainly, but anyone can be fast; it  
was the utilization of years of  
technique combined with an ear  
geared towards finding the  
emotional core of each and every  
note. There is nothing cool and  
calculated about the playing of  
Larry Coryell, more like a controlled  
burn: a fire break set to ensure that  
flames don't run wild.

*Three Guitars: Larry Coryell, Badi  
Assad, and John Abercrombie, The  
Paris Concert* is one of the finest  
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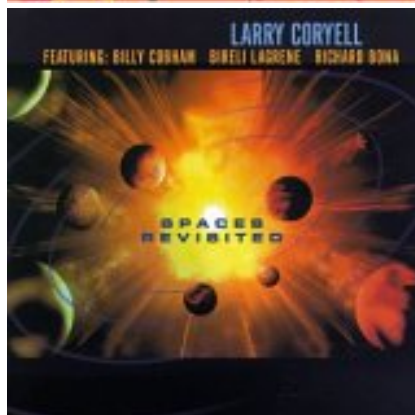
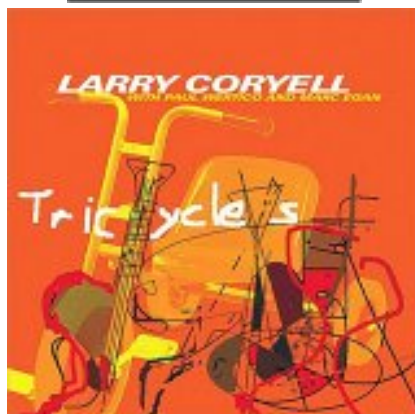
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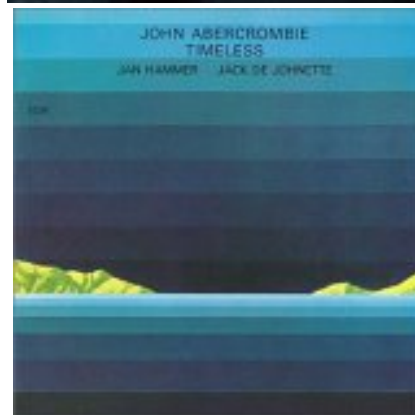
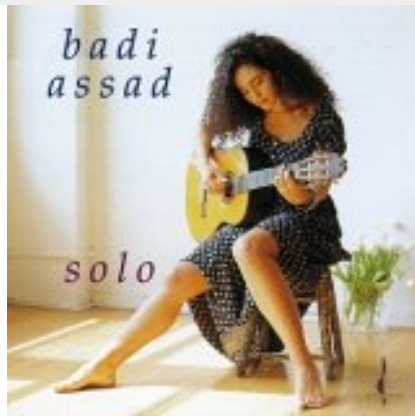
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Comment 1 posted by [Mark Saleski](#) on September 22, 2005 11:49 AM:

wow, this sounds really cool. i may have to check this one out.

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p.s. is it me or are coryell and abercrombie starting to look more and more like jim jarmusch and joe cocker?

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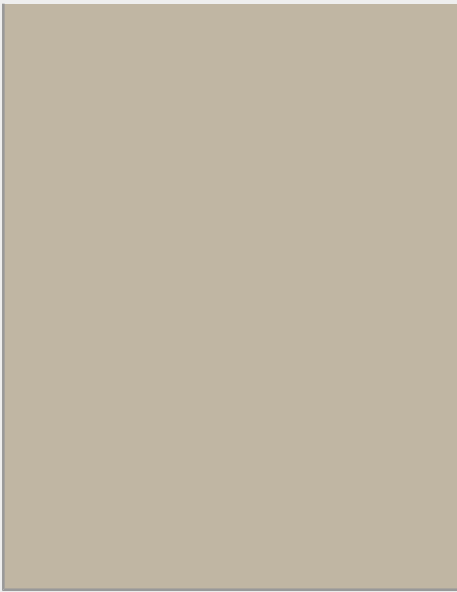
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